

# WILLOW RUN

<b>Author:</b>	Patricia Reilly Giff
<b>Copyright Date:</b>	2005
<b>Publisher:</b>	Yearling, A division of Random House Children's Books
<b>About the Author:</b>	<p>Patricia Reilly Giff was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1935. Giff recalled her childhood as an adventure in reading. She often spent her spare time reading under a tree or sitting in an armchair shared with her father while he read <i>Hiawatha</i>. As a child, Giff knew she wanted to write. After graduating from high school, Giff enrolled at Marymount College, where she studied the classic authors of English literature, such as Keats, Poe, and Pope. Later, influenced by the dean of her school, she changed her major to teaching and it was her main focus for nearly two decades. At age forty, Giff was determined to pursue her childhood dream of writing. Her first published book was <i>Fourth Grade Celebrity</i> in 1979. The success of this book convinced Giff to dedicate herself to the craft of writing. Several of her series books have featured the popular students of her fictional Polk Street School. In the late 1990's, with over sixty books for young readers, Giff has changed her focus by writing <i>Lilly's Crossing</i>, a coming-of-age novel for older readers. The story takes place during World War II, where fifteen-year-old Lilly is left behind with her grandmother as her father joins the army to fight the Nazi invasion overseas. This book won the Newbery Honor and encouraged Giff to pursue the same line of historical fiction in <i>Nory Ryan's Song</i> and its sequel, <i>Maggie's Door</i>. Giff won her second Newbery Honor for <i>Pictures of Hollis Woods</i>, set on Long Island, where a troubled foster-child begins to feel secure at the home of a retired art teacher. Since beginning her writing career in the 1970's, Giff has come to enjoy writing more and more. "Writing became one of the most important parts of my life, a part that now I couldn't do without," she recalls. "I hope to say to all the children I've loved that they are special...that all of us are special... important because we are ourselves." In 1994, she and several family members opened a children's bookstore named, The Dinosaur's Paw, to help bring children and books together.</p>
<b>Author's Webpage:</b>	<p><a href="http://www.randomhouse.com/features/patriciareillygiff/">http://www.randomhouse.com/features/patriciareillygiff/</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.randomhouse.com/author/results.pperl?authorid=10018&amp;view=full_sptlght">http://www.randomhouse.com/author/results.pperl?authorid=10018&amp;view=full_sptlght</a></p>
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<p><b>Annotation:</b></p>	<p>Meggie Dillon’s life has been changed forever by Word War II. Her older brother enlisted and was shipped off to fight in Europe. Meggie’s father has announced that they must move to Willow Run, Michigan to work in a factory building planes for the war effort. Sadly, the family has to leave Grandpa behind at the family home in Rockaway, New York. Meggie moves into a small apartment and meets Patches and Harlan – other kids whose parents have come to help in the factories for the war. Patches is a mountain girl from Tennessee who has never worn a pair of shoes and Harlan is the boy that convinces Meggie to steal from the ice cream man because he is a spy. Meggie finds the courage to tell the truth and assume the responsibility for her wrong doings. It is there in Willow Run that Meggie faces questions about courage and keeping hope alive. She finds herself wishing things were the way they used to be as she misses Grandpa and worries about her brother Eddie’s safety. With the help of Grandpa and her new found friends, Meggie learns that it is important to have courage and hold onto hope. With the writing of <i>Willow Run</i>, Giff has given us a powerful story of sacrifice, the power of the family, and the strength of those on the home front during World War II. These important issues that apply to youth in any day-and-age are discovered in this story.</p>
<p><b>Booktalk:</b></p>	<p>Everyone must help in the war effort...brother, Eddie, is fighting in Europe and Meggie’s family must move to Willow Run, Michigan for her father to work in an airplane factory. Meggie is sad about leaving Rockaway, her grandpa, and best friend, Lily. While there, Meggie meets Patches and Harlan-whose parents have also brought them to Willow Run to be part of the war effort. It is here that Meggie must face some important questions about courage, the battles in life, and the hope that is necessary to sustain it. Will Meggie have the strength?</p>
<p><b>Characters:</b></p>	<p><b>Meggie Dillon-</b> main character of <i>Willow Run</i> is eleven years old, living in Rockaway, NY, then moving to Willow Run, Michigan  <b>Grandpa-</b> Meggie’s grandfather of German descent that stays back in the family home in Rockaway, NY  <b>Lilly-</b> Meggie’s best friend in Rockaway, NY  <b>Eddie Dillon-</b> Meggie’s older brother who enlists in the army and is sent overseas during World War II  <b>Patches-</b> a freckle-faced girl from Tennessee that becomes a friend to Meggie in Willow Run and lives in the apartment next door.  <b>Harlan Tucker-</b> a dirty-clothed young boy from Detroit, Michigan who lives in Willow Run and that encourages Meggie to steal from the ice cream man.  <b>Arnold the Spy-</b> a young man who was the ice cream truck operator that felt he didn’t have the courage to fight in the war. Meggie befriended Arnold, after stealing ice cream from his truck.  <b>Ronnelle and Lulu:</b> Young woman and her toddler (Lulu) who live in the same apartment building as Meggie and who has a husband in the war. Rondelle becomes a friend of Meggie and her family.</p>

<b>Conflict:</b>	After moving from the family home in Rockaway, New York to Willow Run Michigan, Meggie feels sad, lonely, lost, and hopeless. In this internal conflict, Meggie misses her best friend, her grandpa, her soldier brother, and her home. Eddie, Meggie's brother in the army, is reported missing in action. Meggie has made some new friends, but Meggie feels guilty, as they are stealing from the ice cream man. All of life seems bleak without Grandpa, brother Eddie, and the home Meggie has always known in Rockaway.
<b>Conflict Resolution:</b>	Meggie gathers courage and hope from many sources, including her grandpa's medal, Eddie's girlfriend's letter, and winning a contest that will give her money to get Grandpa to Willow Run. Meggie's friends and family offer support and love to help Meggie understand that hope must endure and that life should be spent being happy for each day.
<b>Genre:</b>	Historical Fiction
<b>If you like this book, you'll love...</b>  Patricia R. Giff's	<i>Lilly's Crossing- (companion book)</i> <i>Pictures of Hollis Woods</i> <i>A House of Tailors</i>
Similar subject matter...	Bergman, Tamar. <i>Along the Tracks</i>  Bishop, Claire H. <i>Twenty and Ten</i>  Haugaard, Erik C. <i>The Little Fishes</i>  Heneghan, James. <i>Wish Me Luck</i>  Lowry, Lois. <i>Number the Stars</i>  Salisbury, Graham. <i>Under the Blood-Red Sun</i>  Yolen, Jane. <i>The Devil's Arithmetic</i>
<b>Interest Level:</b>	<b>5-8</b>
<b>Reading Level:</b>	<b>5.2</b>
<b>Read-Aloud passages:</b>	Chapter 19, page 132: "I wonder..." my heart began to thump. I tore it open and began to read: "Dear Miss Dillion..." (Passage about Meggie winning a contest that will give her money to bring Grandpa for a visit) Chapter 22, pages 148-149: "Dear Eddie, I'm putting this letter..." (Meggie's letter to soldier brother that shows her growth in hope and courage)

<b>Setting:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Set in 1944 during World War II</li><li>• Story begins in Rockaway, New York</li><li>• Meggie's family moves to Willow Run, Michigan so her father can work in a factory producing B54 airplanes</li></ul>
<b>Point of View</b>	First Person
<b>Theme:</b>	Willow Run is the factory town in Michigan where Meggie Dillon's family moves to work for the war effort during World War II. Willow Run is also the place where Meggie is confronted with the issues of finding the courage and happiness to go on after her life is changed and to gather hope that her brother will come home safely from the war.

Created by Karen Law

[Karelaw@comcast.net](mailto:Karelaw@comcast.net)